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Oral History Interview

NSA-OH-09-83

with

CAPT RUDOLPH T. FABIAN (USN Retired)

4 May 1983

Port Charlotte, Florida

By R. D. Farley

*Reviewed, audited  
and edited.  
9 Dec 88  
This is final  
copy. RDT*

FARLEY: Today is 4 May 1983. Our interviewee, CAPT Rudolph T. Fabian, U.S. Navy (Retired). CAPT Fabian, after lengthy sea duty beginning in 1931, commanded the Navy intelligence unit Station CAST in the Philippines in 1940 and throughout the early days of World War II. A few months following Pearl Harbor he was evacuated from Corregidor with his troops to Australia where he assisted in establishing FRUMEL at Melbourne. Support to Navy operations in late 1941 and early 1942 was provided almost solely by the Navy Unit in the Philippine Islands. Interview is taking place in CAPT Fabian's residence at Port Charlotte, Florida. Interviewer, Bob Farley. CAPT Fabian desires that the classification of these tapes be SECRET - HANDLE VIA COMINT CHANNELS ONLY. This is NSA Oral History 09-83.

FARLEY: Sir, again before we start let me thank you much for giving me some time. I've heard about you all my career even though you were in the Navy and I was in the Army.

FABIAN: I hope that I'll help.

FARLEY: I know you will.

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FABIAN: As I say, the date department is what's confusing me.

FARLEY: Sure.

FABIAN: I graduated from the Naval Academy in 1931 and went to sea on the battleship TENNESSEE and spent two years on that.

FARLEY: And what kind of a job did you have there, Captain?

FABIAN: I was in gunnery for the most part, and turret officer and that sort of thing. From there I went to do what everybody had to do, duty on an auxiliary ship. Everybody in those days had to do a certain amount of auxiliary duty. So, having gone to that, my class was coming up for post graduate school while I was on board and I had applied for post graduate instruction in ordnance. And the day the selection board came out for post graduate training I was not on it. And I was madder than ol' Billy Hell. So that day I had a letter three pages long, typewritten, from then Commander Safford. You know who he is.

FARLEY: Yes, Laurance Safford.

FABIAN: And in these three long typewritten pages, he said that he had requested that my name be withheld in order that I might have an opportunity to take advantage of what he had to offer. Well, after I read the letter I didn't know what the hell he was offering. So I took it to several senior officers on the ship and they read it. I finally found one who said, "Yes, I know a little bit about this." He said, "I suggest that since you haven't gotten your post graduate selection in hand you better go ahead and take it." So I did and I got back to Washington to find that there were three of us in this class. My instructor was the now Admiral Reed who lives

down in Marco and the two other students besides myself were Sherlock Holmes and Bill Braun.

FARLEY: Sherlock his real name?

FABIAN: No. No.

FARLEY: What was his real name then?

FABIAN: I can't remember...Merrill something or other, MS.

FARLEY: It wasn't the W. J. Holmes?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: All right.

FABIAN: The training consisted of classroom type on various things and the very simplest of ciphers and then graduating up to Vigenere tables and all that sort of thing to the point where you finally got up to the machine, the ENIGMA, and we actually solved an ENIGMA. We had to do that independently.

FARLEY: Right. Did you have somebody grading your work?

FABIAN: Oh yes, Admiral Reed was our overseer the whole time. After we finished the course we went down to the practical department where they were actually working on these things. Now the OP-20-G at that point was a very very small outfit.

FARLEY: Was it called OP-20-G then?

FABIAN: Yeah, umhu.

FARLEY: And this was in what year, sir?

FABIAN: Uh, now don't glue me down to this.

FARLEY: No, no, Approximately?

FABIAN: Uh,

FARLEY: Mid 30's?

FABIAN: Well I graduated in 31 so this would have been about '38 or '39.

FARLEY: Good.

FABIAN: Commander Safford was the head of it and the immediate head of our section was Sid Goodwin. E.S.L. Goodwin, who you may have run across.

FARLEY: He sent regards to you also. I saw him in Pebble Beach. He said be sure and see CAPT Fabian and tell him "hello."

FABIAN: Good. Thank you, and under him was "Ham" Wright who worked out at 14, Comm 14, and then, two linguists on loan, one civilian, and one officer. And the officer at that point was this Kramer, who figures prominently in the books. We were working on various ciphers. "Ham" Wright was the principle cryptanalyst and he was pretty good, but we really weren't getting too damn far on any of them.

FARLEY: What targets were they?

FABIAN: Japanese.

FARLEY: All Japanese?

FABIAN: All Japanese, right.

FARLEY: Can you remember the organization structure? I know you said it was pretty much in its infancy but was there any organization structure at all in OP-20-G.

FABIAN: Yes there was OP-20-GY which is the cryptanalyst, OP-20-GX had to do with the training of intercept operators. One interesting sidelight of that, one of the people who ran that finally set up an organization called "On-the-Roof-Gang." The training place was on the roof. I get I get their newsletter -- I'm an associate member of that. And then there was GT but I can't remember what the hell GT did. Well, in any event, to go on, there was a rotational scheme. After you finished your course and you went down to actually work in the practical work one

officer each year had to go out to the Asiatic Station and Holmes was told that he was going to be it. But Holmes pulled a few wires and begged off because he had a wife and two children, I guess. And so Safford called me in and said that Holmes wasn't going to go, that I was going to go. Well I had a wife and a youngster too but that didn't seem to make a hell of a lot of difference to him. The rotation scheme was this, that one officer would go out and he would actually report to the shore site activity which at that point was in Cavite. The officer who was relieved then would go to the Staff Commander in Chief Asiatic Fleet, and then after he was relieved he did staff work to make up the remainder of his time and then he was sent back to the States. Well, I went out and relieved Rufe Roeder who was my predecessor, Admiral Roeder and he went to the Staff.

FARLEY: Could I bounce back to OP-20-G? I want to spend a lot of time on the Philippines but could you talk about personalities in OP-20-G? Tell me what sort of a person Safford was?

FABIAN: Safford was a brilliant man whose mind worked faster than his mouth. He really was like this (motioned with his hands). He was quick, brilliant, but awfully, awfully quick and he irritated people being this way. And in his relationship with other people in the Navy department I don't think he was very popular. I can't remember who the personalities were in GT and GX.

FARLEY: Was Redfield Mason there?

FABIAN: Rosie belonged to ONI and Rosie was the linguist, the officer linguist, who would come down daily from ONI and read whatever we had to read. And in addition to that, and this is an interesting facet, he established a short course in telegraphic Japanese and each day we'd kick the day

off by an hour in a classroom reading Tokohone. I don't know whether you took Japanese or do you know Tokohone?

FARLEY: Yes, right.

FABIAN: So we got the telegraphic part down pretty good and it served a pretty darn good purpose later on. (Pause) Now then getting back to...

FARLEY: Was John <sup>ie</sup>Leitwiler~~r~~ there?

FABIAN: John <sup>ie</sup>Leitwiler was there too...he relieved me in the Philippines.

FARLEY: But he wasn't at OP-20-G when you were there.

FABIAN: No. No. We overlapped a short while.

FARLEY: OK. Are there any other people at OP-20G we should talk about that you would like to record your impressions of?

FABIAN: Well, "Ham" Wright was very methodic, very patient, very hard worker, but didn't communicate very well. He couldn't pass it on, so to speak. Kramer, who was one of the linguists who came down from topside and figured later in the books was up on "cloud nine." He didn't communicate either. Didn't have anything to say. Rosie Mason was very, very outgoing. He was great. He did the organization a hell of a lot of good. Now let me think of others? Sid Goodwin we've already covered.

FARLEY: Yes, right. Was Sid by the book?

FABIAN: Pardon?

FARLEY: Was Sid Goodwin pretty much by the book. Was he a man who took it step by step?

FABIAN: Yeah, pretty much so, pretty much so. I wouldn't say completely, but Sid got himself in a little mess later on in life with.

Has McCollum ever figured in your interviews?

FARLEY: Yes.

FABIAN: Well, McCollum was an empire builder and an extrovert, and he wanted to do the whole thing. I'm gonna get my stories mixed up here.

FARLEY: That's all right, that's all right.

FABIAN: Uh...

FARLEY: If you want to relax and sit back there CAP we can continue.

FABIAN: Oh no I'm perfectly fine. Let me go back to the way I started, and then we'll get to these personalities later.

FARLEY: All right.

FABIAN: I'd like the story to be woven pretty much the way it happened. I reported to Cavite and the office then was the officer in charge -- (bell rings in background). A couple yeomen who did crypted work and intercept operators. The crypted work that we were doing at that point was a very minor cipher, you see, Maru boat cipher and that sort of thing, China riverboat ciphers. In the meanwhile our tunnel from the war plan had been started out on Corregidor. Now Jack Holtwick was the one who actually got the thing started. Jack was a brilliant guy and a nice guy, very competent guy. Then Roeder relieved him and went on to supervise the building of the tunnel and the quarters and what have you, and then I relieved "Rufe" and he went to the Staff and I then took it over. About this time it was in its finishing stages.

FARLEY: This was in the late 30's or I'm sorry, early forties possibly?

FABIAN: Yeah, yeah. So I stayed with the Roeder's for some time and I sent my family up to Bagio because my wife had broken a leg on the way out. But come time when the tunnel was finished we moved out there and thank goodness we were able to do it in orderly fashion. It

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wasn't quite finished. The enlisted mess was not finished, so we had to set that up in another building. The officers' quarters weren't finished but they had enough enlisted quarters to house the officers as well, so we occupied one of the enlisted quarters on the island. It was a very well planned thing with few exceptions. One, it was at the isolated end of the island.

FARLEY: Describe the tunnel to me. I have a question. If you can give me the precise date you moved into the tunnel. Somebody said, "Please find out from Captain Fabian."

FABIAN: I don't think I can ever do that.

FARLEY: All right, all right. Then describe the tunnel if you can.

FABIAN: Well, the tunnel was located at the Monkey Point end of the island. Oh hell, I've got a map here that I was going to give you. I had a map here. Don't know where the hell it is now. (Seems to be searching for the map)

FARLEY: Is it on the desk there?

FABIAN: Well, on the Monkey point end of the island, which is the far removed area from bottom side where the water supply and the power supply was. So the day the war started, the day they started on us, bombing, we lost our power and we lost our water. Now, power, we had an emergency diesel. And we started using that 24-hours a day. The tunnel itself was built to accommodate us and all of our intercept operators and some general communications personnel. And we went in through a double iron gate, had a Marine sentry at all times, day and night and the outer tunnel was, I would say 100 feet long.

FARLEY: This was living quarters?

FABIAN: No, this was storage area. Then we went in through a door and about

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150 feet straight was intercept positions and transmission positions. But immediately on the left there was another roughly 100 feet of office space for cryptanalysts and traffic analysts and what have you to work. Beyond that was a vault with a three-combination lock on it. When we first moved in we were working on minor ciphers. Riverboat, Yangtze River, but doing some traffic analysis. And we were getting pretty well settled in the tunnel when Sir Tom Phillips, who was Commander in Chief of the British Eastern Fleet, asked Admiral Hart to send a staff down to exchange ideas and get ourselves ready because we were all sure the war was going to come. It was just a matter of when. So they asked me to send one party and I sent Jeff Dennis, who actually did not belong to me, but Roeder had relieved him and he had time left to do. So Admiral Hart said to himself, "Dennis can do more good for the organization by going back out and working on traffic analysis." So Dennis came and he worked on traffic analysis with Whitlock, Charlie Johns, Benjie Groundwater, and a couple others. Dennis went down and on his return he brought back from the British a solution of this five number system.

FARLEY: Did he go to London?

FABIAN: Dennis didn't go to London, they went to Singapore.

FARLEY: Singapore, all right.

FABIAN: Singapore. He brought back the solution, how to recover the keys, the daily keys. How the code was made up and a lot of code values. And since it was a very heavy volume system, it was the heaviest volume system on the air. I talked with my people and I went back to the CNO and requested permission to drop everything else and go to work on this five number system. And we did pretty well on it.

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We couldn't do any solid reading no, but we could pick up stop phrases like "enemy," "enemy submarine," or "enemy aircraft." But we were coming along pretty fast. Incidentally we also had direction finders way out on the point, so we could keep track of fleet movements and so forth. Well, now, I made some notes here. Mine are haphazard.

FARLEY: Oh, that's all right.

FABIAN: Uh. (pause)

FARLEY: We'll go back and I'll ask you some specific questions later on.

FABIAN: After Sir Tom had his conference and war was obviously approaching, the general service communicators in Cavite had been strengthened up with bodies and what have you, with some very capable people. Meanwhile, Meanwhile, it was decided that all our dependents would be sent back to the States which was done. And they decided to get the student linguists out of Japan while they still had time. So we got Rufus Taylor, Tom Mackey, and Cole. I don't know whatever happened to him. But Tom Mackey was a, God he was a tower of strength, brilliant, I mean Rufe Taylor.

FARLEY: Yeah, Rufe. I know Rufe.

FABIAN: They got them out on time and about this time Pearl Harbor was bombed and all hell started breaking loose out there. General Service Communications, when they bombed Cavite for the first time, decided to get the hell out of Cavite, period, and they had excess personnel. So there accrued to me four people who were CWO's and what have you, ~~McKellar~~ <sup>MacKallor</sup>. Let me think. What's his name the guy who became an Admiral?

FARLEY: Cook?

FABIAN: Business machine guy, Cook, Ralph Cook. One other, Ray Lewis. So we put ~~McKellar~~ <sup>MacKallor</sup> on handling the communications on the Purple machine.

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He was our Purple machine operator.

FARLEY: You had a Purple machine back then?

FABIAN: We had a Purple machine. Definitely, and as a matter of fact while we were on this I'll deviate for a moment and tell you about this. We solved some keys. <sup>Max Kallon</sup> ~~McKellar~~ was pretty good at it but we had a free exchange with Washington. We read all the traffic. Admiral Hart came out once a week to read all the background traffic in that system. We also sent copies of it to General MacArthur via a ferry that ran back and forth between Corregidor and the Mainland. It was run by a Naval Reserve, so they cleared him to carry this stuff and he in turn delivered it to a man named Joe Sherr, who I think was killed out in New Delhi later on in the war.

FARLEY: Yes, yes. Plane crash.

FABIAN: We kept a full exchange of that nature going. Now, Cavite was bombed and we got these other people and actually pretty soon MacArthur moved himself out to the island. And he set himself up in a set of quarters about a quarter of a mile from the Malinta Hill tunnel. The bombing got pretty God damn hot and heavy out there but we evolved a system to protect MacArthur where our direction finder operators could pick up enemy aircraft approaching. They could track them all the way down, they could tell them when they were turning toward us so we were able to put air raid warning signals out on the air. We had a little transmitter in the tunnel and we would set up "Condition Red," and all that sort of thing. We'd also get word to MacArthur so he could haul ass from his quarters and get down in the tunnel and get protected. The day the war started we were very much encouraged by listening to a Maru boat on the east coast of Luzon that was being

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bombed by our bombers, which we had a few left, and he came on the air with an unenciphered code. And I promptly went on the air to all the other units. Well, I'm getting ahead of myself here. First I recommended that the other units pick up JN25 and drop everything else, that was a high volume system. So they actually had started doing that. But we weren't reading much as I say. So when this guy came up with an unenciphered code I put it on the air and 14 came back and said, "We're very encouraged with your so-and-so and it was a big help in getting started in that new system."

FARLEY: Did anybody object to you dropping JN25?

FABIAN: No no no. They gave us permission right now. Right now. Now, meanwhile the war is progressing, and we ain't winnin'. And I got to thinking one day, it could be a hell of a blow to the Americans if this outfit were captured, my outfit was captured, or any one of them. So I went on the air to CINC Asiatic Fleet and I said that I think plans should be made to consider moving out all these people in groups and getting them the hell out of this war area. And they came back and said, "Yes, thats a hell of a good idea. We'll start with SEA DRAGON which will be in on the such and such date." So I went out with Gil Richardson, Swede Carlson, and a few operators, I can't remember. And a lot of equipment and a lot of code stuff that probably we shouldn't have been carrying in a submarine at that point because had it been captured we'd have been in trouble. But, we just had to take a chance. So we went down to the south dock in Corregidor rendezvoused after dark with a sub that had come in the night before and was on the bottom all day. And he finally came up and we were taken out in small boats and put aboard and they searched us.

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Took our firearms away and what have you, and put our junk on board and then we got underway. And we were shot at on the way back to Corregidor by an enemy sub but fortunately missed. The trip down to Surabaja was fairly uneventful. No incidents occurred of any great shakes.

FARLEY: I'd like a little more detail on your pre-evacuation plans. First, how did you break down the men into the three groups?

FABIAN: Well, we had to provide for servicing locally. We had to take enough along so that we could pick up the threads when we got to where we were going. So to that end we had enough linguists, so we took two, Gil Richardson and Swede Carlson, we took me, we took two traffic analysts and we took some intercept operators, and one communicator, Ray Lewis. Then they had also told us that the next ship, next submarine would take a group out on such and such a date.

✓ So when I turned over I left the works to John <sup>le</sup>Leitwiler so he took over that and divided up the troops and he left himself until last and we God damn near lost him, they got bombed.

FARLEY: CAPT Whitlock asked me to ask you about whether you remember the discussion over a bottle of bourbon outside the tunnel, a couple of nights before the evacuation.

FABIAN: Oh yes, yes, yes. Specifically I can't, I had the bourbon. Before the war started we sent into a firm in Manila called "Kuzell and Streif"--two Nazi's, and ordered a case of bourbon and it was delivered. We hadn't paid for it yet when the war started. So every night I'd take a bottle of this out and we'd ask a couple of people to go out, this is all after dark, and sit down and have two or three

drinks and then button it back up and do the same the next night.

FARLEY: That's the story, and he said something about you told him that you were going. I don't mean "bug out," but you were going to leave because you'd been ordered to leave and he suggested that you should advise the troops why. Do you remember anything on that?

FABIAN: That I should what?

FARLEY: Advise the troops the reason why you were going to leave?

FABIAN: Well, yes we did that. No reason why they shouldn't have known and it gave them a ray of hope, really.

FARLEY: Absolutely.

FABIAN: We disembarked at Surabaja and when I crawled out of that God damn submarine and saw it in broad daylight I would never have gotten aboard it. Cause it was in the shipyard when the war started and the outer hull had been pierced by fragments. Christ there were holes you could crawl through. But it was a beautifully clicking ship Petey Ferrall was the skipper of it and that was the most precise thing and I'm saying this because a little later on I'll tell you about the next sub I was on.

FARLEY: All right, good.

FABIAN: We got to Surabaja. We checked in with the local authority down there and we were told to take the troops up to Bandung. And Rosie Mason was up in Lembang with Admiral Hart and he ordered us to check in with the Dutch Navy Department. They had a few people working on this stuff too, and merge with them, which we did, in the basement of their Navy department. Meanwhile, we had to set up intercept to keep current with what was being exchanged by the other units that

were still on the air.

FARLEY: You unloaded all your equipment and set up operations in Surabaya or in Bandung?

FABIAN: Yeah, umhu.

FARLEY: I see.

FABIAN: And we didn't last long actually, we stayed there about two weeks. One afternoon I was called up to Lembang and when I got there Mason said "If I ordered you to leave Bandung how soon could you be underway?" And I said, "Well I think four hours." So he said, "Ok., commandeered your own transportation and be in Tjilatjap by morning, sunrise." We boxed everything up, we tried to get the Dutch to go with us but they wouldn't come. Old Colonel Verkuyl who was the head of the unit, was a very loyal Dutchman, and he wasn't about to leave his Java. We commandeered a bus, a truck, two sedans, we put our troops on board and all of our gear and drove all night through road blocks and what have you. Because the Dutch had road blocks set up about every, seemingly every mile, and you had to stop and identify yourself. We had one native driver for the truck and he got scared to death of this and he just ran off in the boon docks and we never did get him back. We arrived in Tjilatjap during an air raid. We sat on the outskirts until it was over and then we went in and checked in with the American authority at that point. Admiral Glassford was then the top dog. See, all of these people came from various sources and they had set up command here and then somebody else would set up command here. I'm tellin you, it was a can of worms. We checked in with him and he said, "All right, the SNAPPER is coming in for you people tonight." No! He said, "The ship

that was supposed to come in for you was sunk, so you'll have to wait a day." Then they called the SNAPPER in. Now the SNAPPER, which I referred to a little while ago was not a precision ship, by any means. We got aboard. First Admiral Glassford called me in, said "Now here's a thousand dollars, when you get to Exmouth Gulf, which is your destination on this sub, you take the first train down to Melbourne or down to Freemantle and then check in down there." Well, we got aboard and the first thing that happened with the SNAPPER is she got out in diving water, they forgot to close the hatch, and Jesus Christ they almost drowned us all. And the ship operated that way the whole trip across. Oh God it was awful. But we finally made Exmouth Gulf, and by this time the battle of the Coral, I mean Java Sea was going on and we arrived in Exmouth Gulf. We looked around and Christ there wasn't anything but a lighthouse about 10 miles over here. So we talked with the Skipper and he said, "Well, you can send the dingy over and go over and check with the lighthouse keeper and find out what gives." So we sent somebody over there, I can't remember who, and he came back and he said, "Yeah, the lighthouse keeper was very nice. He sees an automobile about once a month, but otherwise there ain't no transportation." Well, Java Sea had happened by this time and the stragglers started limping in and Admiral Spec Bernell who had been Admiral Hart's Chief of Staff up in the Philippines came in on the HOLLAND. And he was the senior guy present, so I went over and checked with him and he said, "Well, only thing I can figure out is you move your people over here and we'll take you down to Freemantle on the HOLLAND." Which we did. Uneventful. Checked in down there and particularly checked in with Rosie Mason, who had been



evacuated with Admiral Hart. He said, "Well, just check into a hotel and just wait for the word." So, incidentally, while we were still on Corregidor we weren't eatin' too good. I had stocked the tunnel mouth, the first part of the tunnel with cases upon cases of food. But the day the war started the God damn Army sent trucks out there and commandeered it all and threw it into their general structure, so we then got our food in a truck from the Army, matter of fact. Well, our teeth were all loose and we were in bad shape. We were physical wrecks, but they put us in the Adelphi Hotel in Perth and it didn't take us long to get our health back. There were steak and eggs for breakfast, and all that sort of thing. And we waited, oh I think four or five days. Finally Mason came out and he said, "You and I will fly across to Melbourne." Meanwhile the governments are thrashing together trying to decide where we're going to set up. So we did fly to Melbourne. We checked in at the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board and they said, "Yes we could merge with their unit right in the Naval Board building." Meanwhile the rest of our troops took the train across, which was a three-day run. They say that you don't vary one whit. You don't change course a degree, its straight across.

FARLEY: Of nothing.

FABIAN: Yeah. So we merged with the RAN (Royal Australian Navy) unit and that was Commander Jack Newman, who was running that and he had a rather small outfit. He had I think three linguists topside. He had a couple cryptanalysts and intercept operators out in the country.

FARLEY: What targets did they have?

FABIAN: Um?

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FARLEY: What targets were they operating against, Japanese Navy?

FABIAN: Japanese Navy, right. Now, you mentioned the Central Bureau. They were in town as well and they tried to get us to merge with them, but I had talked with several of their people and I decided that we didn't want to belong to that. Na! Secret inks and all that crap. So we asked and got permission to merge only with the Australians. Meanwhile, we put in desks and we merged in Jack Newman's office as best we could to accommodate our people when they arrived. And we immediately started proceedings to find some place to move into when the rest of our outfit arrived. So they found a place called Monterey, which was a new apartment house. It was partially occupied, but they emptied it for us, knocked holes in the bulkheads between apartments and we set up offices in there. Then we shifted over to that and went into business. Now in the meanwhile, <sup>ie</sup> Leitwiler and company had a helluva time. No, the second trip, who was on that? I can't remember who the leader of the second group was, but they made it uneventfully to Freemantle and came on across and then finally <sup>ie</sup> Leitwiler and Rufe Taylor came in in the last group. Now here again, dates I cannot remember, time exactly, cannot remember.

FARLEY: Well, it was March and April of 42. I think the first group was about mid-March or the 12th of March, thereabouts.

FABIAN: That could be.

FARLEY: Let's see. You were ordered to evacuate on the 1st of February 42. Mason went to Melbourne 8 March 42, and Whitlock was either 16 March or 8 April 42. FRUMEL set up 12 March 42.

FABIAN: You remember more than I do.

FARLEY: Well, I'm reading it.

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FABIAN: Well I sat down and tried to make me a chronological list, but Christ I'm 73 years old. I'm a male menopause sitting here. Meanwhile, we're reading more and more of the JN25. It's coming good now.

FARLEY: You're back in the JN25 now.

FABIAN: Yeah, yeah. It's coming real good.

FARLEY: Did you decide to go back to reading the JN25 instead of the other five digit systems?

FABIAN: Oh yeah.

FARLEY: Was it more fruitful?

FABIAN: We didn't touch anything else but 25 and we were doing pretty well and we were serving MacArthur by pouch. No, wait a minute, back her down, back her down, back her down. Meanwhile our Admiral had gone up to Brisbane to set up.

FARLEY: This is Hart or Leary? Which Admiral was it? Leary or Hart?

FABIAN: It was Leary at that point. Leary, and we had to service him by a code, a private system we had set up. Meanwhile MacArthur has set himself up in Melbourne and while Leary was still there MacArthur sent for him one day and said, "Look, I know you've got this group of people working on Japanese and I want to be supplied with what they produce." My Admiral sent for me and he told me what had happened and said, "I can't refuse him obviously, because he's the theater commander now." But he said, "How to you want me to set it up?" So I said, "Well, I'd seen him operate and he's an actor, he's a great profilest, and it's going to take a world of time unless we set something up to make the thing move fast." I suggested that we set up a time that I would be there every day and that I would get access right now if anybody was with him they'd march out. So they gave me

an automobile and they set this thing up. That I would go there everyday at one o'clock, say, and the doctor, the General's Aide would type a little card out saying I was there. He'd take it in and eight generals would march out. I'd go in and they'd look at this little son of a bitch--a lieutenant, at that point.

FARLEY: What were you a commander? Or a lieutenant, I guess.

FABIAN: Yeah, and say, "What the hell is going on?" So I serviced him everyday that way.

FARLEY: Did you talk to him or just hand him material?

FABIAN: No, I talked to him.

FARLEY: Ok. Did you brief him or did you hand him material?

FABIAN: Well, I had the material there if he wanted to read it, but I briefed him.

FARLEY: I see, good.

FABIAN: Now, and this is where a very interesting thing came up. We were building up our forces up there but we didn't have a hell of a lot. And we started reading about Port Moresby and the fact that the Japanese were going to come in and take Port Moresby. And, so I went over to MacArthur and I briefed him on that and he said, "That can't be right." He said, "My idea of their strategy is going to be that they're going to go down into New Caledonia and then they're going to close off Northeast Australia." I said, "General, This is right, This is gospel!" So I explained to him how the code readings were derived. In other words, one syllable might have come from 20 different other code values, another syllable from 15 or 20 more, and so forth and so on.

FARLEY: Let me switch--(Tape I, side A ends.)

All right sir, go.

FABIAN: Ok huh? Well, to go back, I explained to him that this was gospel, this had to be this way and he said, "Well my God, I've got transports leaving Townsville tomorrow morning for New Caledonia." I said "Well you better change that right now, and just send them out that way instead." So he did. But, then the Battle of the Coral Sea happened.

FARLEY: Did MacArthur understand communications intelligence? Was he familiar with it or did you have to explain?

FABIAN: No, I had to explain to him how things worked, what the process was and how we read it and so forth. That's why, as I say he doubted this, and I said it's got to be, got to be Port Moresby because the words were made up of values from many other solutions. So he finally went around, and then I went back and told my Admiral about our little discussion. I was a little frightened, but it turned out precisely that way.

FARLEY: Did you have any trouble with General Willoughby or General Akin standing outside the door and saying, "When are you going to tell me those secrets?"

FABIAN: No, I wouldn't even talk to Willoughby, because Willoughby was a great big dude who wore kid gloves and slapped his pants with them and and all that sort of crap. I just told my Admiral I didn't want anything to do with him and he went along with that. Now Akin, I didn't have any trouble with him. Matter of fact, I saw him very little.

FARLEY: He's more of a gentlemen than Willoughby.

FABIAN: Yeah, yeah. Things went fairly routinely until Midway started shaping up and my outfit intercepted the 14, I think it was 14,--part message. A great long thing, and we were in a much better position to copy

such stuff than others, so I went on the air and I said that this message existed and that it would appear to us that it's some kind of an operation order, but we can't read but bits of it. I said that if any unit doesn't have it I'll be glad to transmit the raw material to them. They had me transmit the whole thing. Now, before I go further, we had a COPEK system, COPEK was a code for first group of...

FARLEY: Certain communications.

FABIAN: And we had another one for traffic intelligence. But when there was a code change or cipher change we kept those systems loaded, kept an even peak so that the Japanese wouldn't detect anything from it. So that's how these messages got sent to all the units. Meanwhile, FRUPAC, well, let me get this first. When any unit recovered a code value and they proved it in so many instances that it had to be correct, then they would go on the air with that and it's meaning and confirm it. The Midway "AN," ("AF")) I think, I can't remember what the indicator was. FRUPAC had confirmed that as an Island in the Aleutians, and we were reading this stuff and they came back with a translation which referred to Midway and I went back to them and said, "How come you confirm that code value as Aleutians instead?" I didn't get an answer, they ignored me, completely. But, Holmes' book should never have been written, should never have been published. If you read that book, you got the distinct impression that what the hell was Washington doing in the act, what was Australia doing in the act?

FARLEY: That's what we want to talk about later on, go ahead. Continue your story yes, I want a lot of time on that. CAST's contributions, and well, your contributions and HYPO's, HYPO has taken the credit for

everything.

FABIAN: Well sure they have.

FARLEY: CAST didn't do a bloody thing!

FABIAN: That's right, that's right.

FARLEY: So, I want your thoughts on that after you finish your story.

FABIAN: Well, story has, is practically over. Midway came off as FRUPAC read it. But then Holmes' book takes all the credit.

Now, personalities. Goggins was a nice guy. I don't whether he's still living or not. Showers, who is the principal "Whipper-snapper" was a precocious little boy who had worked for me in London and who really couldn't be restrained. He was just, "Gung Ho." Holmes was very ambitious, of course, as you know. I think it's a shame that the book ever got published and if you have a chance to do any propoganda about it, do so. Tell 'em, I said so.

FARLEY: All right sir, thumbs down on it, right? How about Tommy Dyer, talking about personalities, lets run through some.

FABIAN: Tommy was an introvert really. He was damn good, he was eccentric as hell. He would surround himself when there would be a system change with a battery of IBM machines and punch his own cards and do his own figuring and sorting and just stay there and spend maybe all night working on the God damn thing. He was very good though, and he did a great deal of good.

FARLEY: How about Joe Finnegan?

FABIAN: I didn't know Joe Finnegan very well.

FARLEY: Laswell, Marine Officer, Laswell?

FABIAN: I knew Red Laswell and he was a fairly steady individual.

I didn't work closely enough with him to come up with more

than that. Now I had somebody else's name in mind here.

FARLEY: Huckins, Tommy Huckins

FABIAN: Yeah, I didn't know him very well either.

FARLEY: Jack Williams? I can run through some of these, Jack Williams, Ranson Fullerwilder, Jasper Holmes, Tommy Thomas, Mack Showers, Goggins, Tex Rorie.

FABIAN: Tex was a good man. He was "Gung Ho" and a loud voice and all that sort of thing, but he was all right.

FARLEY: How about a Henry M. Anthony, Coast Guard Officer, who was an expert on the Maru code?

FABIAN: No, I never bumped into him.

FARLEY: Zacharias?

FABIAN: Who?

FARLEY: Captain Zacharias

FABIAN: I didn't know him either.

FARLEY: He was one of, well he was a Language Officer.

FABIAN: Yeah, he was well before my time.

FARLEY: And you mentioned Ham Wright and some of those others, how about Rochefort.

FABIAN: Who?

FARLEY: Rochefort, Joe Rochefort.

FABIAN: Oh, Joe Rochefort I never did get to know him very well.

And as far as I was concerned he was pretty steady. Our exchange back and forth was very amicable. I wrote him letters, he wrote me letters, we exchanged information and that sort of thing. And I didn't know this other business was going on, but apparently there was a hell of a lot of jealousy there and apparently Rochefort was



pretty hard-headed about how we were going to do things. So far as I can gather now. I can be accused of quoting rumors cause I just wasn't there and I don't know.

FARLEY: Ok, fine. Did you have any association with Eddie Layton, Admiral Layton, who was a Fleet Intelligence Officer?

FABIAN: No, I knew Eddie, and I called on him a couple of times when I came through there but I didn't, never knew him well.

FARLEY: All right, fine.

FABIAN: He was a great personal friend of Mack Showers, I might add. As far as I can gather almost the same type, if you follow.

FARLEY: I do. Let me verify one story that I'm not sure of. Now you talked about the 14 part attack plan on Midway.

FABIAN: It may not have been 14 parts.

FARLEY: Admiral Cook said that he talked about the "Garble Box" Story, that Melbourne was working a box of garbled traffic and recovered part of the attack orders for Midway and told OP-20-G and Rochefort. Both had messages with garbles in the different places. What I'm trying to find out, is this a true story and was there cooperation among the three Navy Intelligence Elements?

FABIAN: I don't think there was any question about lack of cooperation. I think we collaborated very nicely. Bugs did come in occasionally, like this code value for Aleutian Islands, for Midway. That happened several times, not as importantly as this one, this one was a highly important thing. Now, as you probably know already, we read all of this operation order and we knew the composition of the various ports and where they were going to be, when, and how and all that sort of thing, but the system changed on the first

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of June, and Midway happened when, on the 4th of June, 3rd of June?  
Something like that?

FARLEY: Yes.

FABIAN: So there was 3 or 4 days that they could have changed plans. So I think Spruance played it perfectly. He recognized that this could change, so he was a little, not quite as "Gung Ho" as he would've been otherwise. And, God they certainly clobbered it. It was beautiful to watch, matter of fact you know throughout this whole thing you would beat your God damn brains out solving these things and reading them and sending them in and then to see them happen. That was the greatest satisfaction that one could ever have had. Really, it was beautiful.

FARLEY: Absolutely. Were you advised of that famous "water" message on Midway.

FABIAN: No, not until I read it in the book.

FARLEY: Tell me about your support to the Sub Fleet, the American Submarine Force. Did you pass information, intelligence directly to Comm SUBPAC?

FABIAN: Either passed to them and we also passed to the Unit out in Freemantle. Admiral Christie, I think, was his name. We fed them information. But most of it came by FRUPAC producing it for the others. Now, did you ask about McCollum?

FARLEY: No I did not, would you talk about him?

FABIAN: McCollum was a funny man who wanted to run the whole God damn battle. He wanted to run the whole show. And he asked me to come to Melbourne...

FARLEY: Brisbane?

FABIAN: Up to Brisbane after he took over. He said now I want this and I want this and I want this. I went into the Admiral and I said look, this fellow's got too many wants to suit my blood, and this is the way I propose to do it. And I told him and he said, "That's all

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right, you do it your way." God he hated that. McCollum hated my guts. We did arrive at a fairly equitable solution and we had a format for stuff that we put in a bag to send it up to Brisbane every day. And things went fairly smoothly despite his thoughts about me.

FARLEY: McCollum took over FRUMEL?

FABIAN: No he didn't take it over, he wanted to wreck FRUMEL.

FARLEY: He was Fleet Intelligence Officer, wasn't he.

FABIAN: That's right.

FARLEY: All right.

FABIAN: Now, we just went on the way I described it. Then Sid Goodwin was my relief and Sid came out and he checked in, in Brisbane and reported to the Admiral and came on down. Now whether he even saw McCollum or not, I don't know, but the minute he got to Melbourne there was a message for him to come back to Brisbane. He was called in by McCollum and told, "Now look you did not report to me. I am your boss for all intents and purposes as far intelligence is concerned." And he and Goodwin had a hell of a fight about this thing. And Goodwin's life was, oh God it was awful after that. McCollum just wanted to be the boss, he wanted to be the big shot.

FARLEY: He and Layton didn't get along either.

FABIAN: No, oh God, he was really something. But poor Goodwin, thank God I got out of there.

FARLEY: Where were you sent then, after Melbourne?

FABIAN: When he relieved me they ordered me to Colombo, Ceylon, as liaison for this purpose with the British out there. They had a pretty big unit at a place called Anderson, little thing out of town. So I reported

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to the British Eastern Fleet Commander who was Admiral Frazer at that point. And, actually it was a very unimportant thing, I, all I did was receive the mail and turn it over to them.

FARLEY: You received all the COMINT..?

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: From your unit at Melbourne?

FABIAN: No, they had communications. They were in the five-way net. In other words, they got the whole exchange. All of the raw materials, that sort of thing, I got by bag, and that would be addressed to me through the Navy Liaison Officer and then I would in turn give it to the Anderson.

FARLEY: Would you filter out any of the intelligence or would you give it in bulk to the British?

FABIAN: I would give it in bulk, give it in bulk.

FARLEY: Did somebody protect for us, the Americans, in that they didn't give everything to the British, that they gave select pieces of communications intelligence?

FABIAN: Well, in communications intelligence I don't think they withheld anything. I think they got the works. Now, the British occasionally had to be watched about how they used it. They talked a little more than we. And to that end, the senior U.S. Naval Liaison Officer with the British Eastern Fleet was detached and there was no relief, so I took over his job. I'd go to the staff conferences. Admiral Frazer's conferences, and I would pick up things now and then that didn't look very good and I'd speak my piece.

FARLEY: Um, good. Sir could I bounce back to Melbourne? There's one location or Navy unit that has always come up. Nobody can tell us much about

it. Bellconnen.

FABIAN: Bellconnen was the Australian General Service Communication Station. They called it "the Bell" and it was located over somewhere near Canberra.

FARLEY: So it was Australian and not American?

FABIAN: Australian right, strictly Australian.

FARLEY: Beautiful, thanks much for clearing that up, because we've had so bloody many confusing answers. Somebody said it was a Navy DF station, and they went on and on. Well, this clears it up. That's great.

FABIAN: Yeah, "Bell" was just what they call their station over there.

FARLEY: That's great, that's just great. So how long did you stay with the British East Fleet?

FABIAN: I stayed there roughly a year and then I came home.

FARLEY: That was, well the war was over when you came home or you came home before the war ended?

FABIAN: I came home before the war was over and I went to work at on the staff at? God, my memory is shot.

FARLEY: Back in DC?

FABIAN: Washington.

FARLEY: Ok.

FABIAN: I went to work on the staff there. I was J5, I guess.

FARLEY: Good. Before we get into details on it, I have a lot of specific questions. You don't mind if I bounce around do you?

FABIAN: No indeed.

FARLEY: Now Whitlock in his interview mentioned an Andy Anderson who was recovering code groups and additives and was taking differences and checking them and recording them in a book. He said that you used to

needle Anderson about the recoveries and Anderson had recovered 5 or 600 additives compared with 200 by others. Then you found out about the system and chewed out Anderson and used the system for everybody so he didn't profit by it for himself.

FABIAN: I don't remember this all.

FARLEY: You don't?

FABIAN: I don't remember anybody named Anderson.

FARLEY: Andy Anderson. He was the guy who flunked the physical, never accepted a commission.

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: You don't remember that one either.

FABIAN: I don't remember him period. Isn't that funny now? Cause God, when you live as close as I lived to those guys you knew them all pretty closely.

FARLEY: Thats all right, I thought that would be an interesting sidelight.

FABIAN: Yeah, I just don't know him.

FARLEY: Lets go back to the Philippines now. Could you tell me the sequence, chronological sequence of the moves in the Philippines from the first time CAST was established, and if you can remember any dates on that I'd be grateful and then take me through the sequence.

FABIAN: I can't, I can't glue down dates. As I say we were shifted to Corregidor from the Cavite shipyard. We were pretty well established there. I made my recommendation to get the unit out before any of us were captured. It was accepted. Now dates, I just cannot furnish you dates. I just, I can't remember. I tried to put that on these pieces of paper. I remember some little thing and run in here and write it down, but I can't glue down dates.

FARLEY: Ok. But the sequence was from Cavite to?

FABIAN: The sequence was Cavite to Corregidor to Surabaya to Fremantle to Melbourne.

FARLEY: Ok. good. Ok, some details on the CAST operation. You don't remember dates. Would you be aware of what the initial instructions were from Headquarters for the mission, the function of the unit. Was that ever told to you after you arrived.

FABIAN: You mean at the outset?

FARLEY: Yes sir.

FABIAN: No. No it was very fairly free wheeling other than the fact that we knew from Washington that our mission was to work on the Maru boat ciphers and the Yangtze river ciphers and all that sort of thing. And I used to frequently wonder about this very high volume system and nobody doing anything about it. When Dennis came back from Sir Tom Phillips' conference and it looked kind of easy to us so that was when I went on the air and recommended that we drop everything else to go to that. Now the only other policy letter, is what you're saying I think, the only other policy letter that I can ever remember was that when McCollum started getting dirty and nasty and trying to run things, I went back to Washington and I said please come up with a strong policy letter and give a copy to him so that he knows what he can do and I know what I can do and when I can tell him to, "Go to hell!"

FARLEY: Part of an early interview you gave said that CAST was established in the Philippines in about 1936 and there's a questions mark after that, and then it was first located in a small shack in Mariveles.

FABIAN: No, that's when Goodwin had it, and that was purely intercept, that

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was.

FARLEY: Good. This is what I need clarified.

FABIAN: Well, first of all it was at Mariveles and then I think they shifted from Mariveles up to, what the hell was the name of the place that had the dry docks?

FARLEY: Not Subic Bay?

FABIAN: Not what?

FARLEY: Subic Bay? Or did that come later?

FABIAN: No, that came later. No, maybe it was Subic, I guess it was Subic. See Mariveles is just across from Corregidor, across the north channel and they lived very primitively there. I used to remember hearing somebody talk about that. One of the intercept operators said that they were chopping snakes head off with hatchets and what have you. But when Goodwin I guess had it in Subic Bay.

FARLEY: Was he the first CO of CAST?

FABIAN: So far as I can remember, yes. And then he moved it from there down to Cavite and in Cavite we were in the old city so called. It was a walled city and we had a shack on top of a ramp. And that's when I took over. That's where they were, but we didn't stay there very long thereafter. I shifted from there out to Corregidor.

FARLEY: Could I give you the list of names of commanders I have and see if this was accurate. Goodwin, Jack Holtwick, Jeff Dennis.

FABIAN: Now, wait a minute there, Goodwin.

FARLEY: Goodwin 36, 37?

FABIAN: Yeah, then I guess Holtwick,

FARLEY: 37, 38?

FABIAN: Then Dennis, then Roeder, then myself, then Lietwiler.

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FARLEY: Now there's a name that creeps in here that I want you to straighten out for me. Swede Carlson.

FABIAN: Swede Carlson was a linguist who worked for me in Corregidor.

FARLEY: Did he ever serve as CO of CAST?

FABIAN: No, no, no. You see this having been a communication activity, they didn't want ONI people running things. It was a little jealousy there you see. So he never was the CO, no.

FARLEY: Ok that clears it up because somebody somewhere said that he was the CO of station CAST for a while.

FABIAN: You know, I might add that Carlson was a very very capable linguist. He was very slow and methodical, but boy when he said it, that was it. And he did all the translations for the Purple machine.

FARLEY: Ok, good. Sir, back to the operations. Who was your superior officer when you were CO of CAST? To whom did you report?

FABIAN: I reported to the Commander of the 16th Naval District who at first was Smeeley and then he drove himself crazy worrying about the start of the war and he was relieved by, oh, a great extrovert. What the hell was his name? I don't remember.

Here was one little facet I didn't tell you about, that you might be interested in. I told you we had a vault. Now, two things, one we had come by some IBM machinery, a printer and a sorter, card cutter, and this is about the same time as we got Ralph Cook. And Cook set it up and we started punching cards, and he had a pretty going organization back there and as I say he later became top dog back in Washington. Now, Smeeley, used to call me up from Cavite and say, "I'm sending an airplane for you, to be there at one o'clock, I want you to come in and see me." So I'd go down to the south dock. Now, our boat service

was a row boat that they had given us which we kept in an old balloon hanger down there and we'd row out to the airplane, go in to Cavite. And he was worried about the war reserve publications, the general service publications. He said, "I'm afraid to keep them there," he said, "If the Japanese capture that, we're gone. Can you take them?" I said "Sure, I've got plenty of room out there." So I said, "If this is the go-ahead, then I will have some bins and you can put your own locks on them, tamper proof locks, and they'll be safe out there. The next day I'd be sitting there, "I'm goint to send an airplane out for you." I'd get there. "I still wonder whether we're doing the right thing or not, I'm very frightened about this." And this was the kind of worry wart he was. And as I say he finally drove himself nuts and they had to relieve him. Now, can I unplug this for a second I want to go get those maps?

FARLEY: Sure.

FABIAN: About a year ago, I don't know where the hell I got them but this is Corregidor, Japanese version. I've never had this translated. I'm going to give these to you.

FARLEY: Good.

FABIAN: (Referring to Map) This is the airfield, and we were located about here. Our antenna field was all over here. Our direction finder was further out here on the point, and there was a family of monkeys that lived out here further. And we had our direction finder, it was a DT and we had it mounted, in a shack. As you know, it has long arms and rotated by hand power and so it had to be a pretty good size building to be able to operate and keep it closed up. So

the operator would be out taking bearings and the tribe of monkeys would be up in the tree watching what the hell's going on here.

Now, this is the balloon hanger I told you about. And this is bottom side. This is where the docks are and what have and all the rest is self explanatory. Now, where the hell are we here. I don't know where that is. But you will have facilities to have these translated and they might be useful, I don't know.

FARLEY: You want me translate them and send you back copies?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: Would you care for them?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: I'd be happy to do it.

FABIAN: Too much water under the bridge. I'm getting rid of things now.

FARLEY: Are you? Don't throw anything away that you think we could use. We'll take anything you have.

FABIAN: Well, I don't know that I have anything else, but now that you say that, I'll look through my junk. The reason I can't establish dates, I might add, is that about 6 months ago I looked on my shelf in there and I had copies of orders and travel orders and papers and what have you and I just chucked the whole God damn bunch. Now I'm sorry I did it.

FARLEY: Yeah. We would have been delighted to keep all those in our archives.

FABIAN: Now what is the purpose? This is just to write a history. Is that correct.

FARLEY: Right. Do you mind if I go on?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: More questions? Ok, thats great. We asked to whom you reported. What

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type of material did you work on, you talked about JN-25 and the five digit system. Did you work on any basic material, or voice material or anything else other than JN-25?

FABIAN: No. At the outset we worked as I say on Maru boat ciphers and China, the Yangtze river ciphers and that sort of thing. We used a direction finder quite freely and sent bearings in by mail but and we did traffic analysis. That's where Whitlock shined. And that's where Jeff Dennis was a master. My God he could put things together so nicely. But no, we didn't work on anything else.

FARLEY: Who provided your raw material? Where were your intercept sites, or was that nearby your location?

FABIAN: Oh yes. We had our antenna field where I showed you.

FARLEY: Yes.

FABIAN: Where Monkey Point was, and we had an antenna field and we had our own intercept operators in the tunnel. They copied all this stuff and wrote it up and sent it in.

FARLEY: So it was right next door, really, so to speak.

FABIAN: Oh yeah, yeah.

FARLEY: And then the process was an intercept to a logger. Would you mind running through the sequence, if you remember, from intercept to translation.

FABIAN: Well, from intercept it would then be sorted by systems. Let's take JN-25 for instance because that, that can be better suited. The key would have been recovered if it was an intercept, the key probably was solved. If it wasn't solved the stuff would be put aside until it was solved. Then it would go to a couple people who would take these long pieces of graph paper we had set up. Do you know the structure of JN-25?

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FARLEY: Yes.

FABIAN: You know how it was made up?

FARLEY: But please say it again for the record.

FABIAN: Well, all right. Hajime, message start. And they never started a message with the first word in the paragraph. They'd start maybe in the middle and then double back so that every message started at a different place. And the keys, when they were recovered you had to determine how to write them up. So they would be written up to be in phase so to speak, in rhythm. Then when you got a depth of eight or ten lines then you could go to work solving your cipher. To that end all the Hajime's were divisible by three, so that you always knew you had a correct value. Then you'd test a know value here against all these others and if that produced code values that met the conditions, divisible by three and all that sort of thing, then you would assume that it was correct and put it down as a tentative recovery. Then you'd go to the next message and go through the same process, always staying in line. Now, we had two people who would transcribe these big sheets and that was their sole purpose would be to take the raw messages, apply the key, write them out on the sheet. And then each of us who was working on a recovering cipher would finish up a sheet, throw it in the stack, take another sheet, all written up and ready for us to go to work. You can well imagine that when a system changed how chaotic it was to get into it again. But we always relied pretty much on structure of the messages. For instance, if some guy sent off an unenciphered code, oh that was beautiful, that helped, oh God that helped. In the makeup of the systems they had several little

idiosyncrasies, one was the "we we" ("way") code. If they didn't have a value for it in English they would spell it out in Kata Kana with a "we we" at the beginning and end. Then they had an I Ro Ha Ni when they wanted to tabulate something. That was normally a medical report I think, I Ro Ha Ni. I can't remember any other examples, but it was kind of fun chewing on them when you got your foot in the door. We used to go down there. Hell, we'd go down to the tunnel, when we were still in our quarters. We'd go down to the tunnel about 7:30 in the morning after breakfast we'd work, we'd go home for lunch, come back and work, go home for dinner, have a couple drinks, go back, work until maybe 10 or 11 o'clock. And it was in your blood. You thought this stuff. But it was worth it.

FARLEY: Right! So you did the complete processing, went through the whole processing cycle from intercept to translation.

FABIAN: Oh yeah, yeah.

FARLEY: Did you pass any raw material back to HYPO or back to Washington?

FABIAN: Oh yeah.

FARLEY: What was that?

FABIAN: Everything.

FARLEY: Oh, they got everything, also. And you worked on it too.

I see. So there was an exchange among the three of you?

FABIAN: Sometimes we would find that we had both worked on the same portion of the book so to speak, but that's all right. It helps confirm when you get two or three people agreeing on something.

FARLEY: So the fruits of your effort went directly to the Fleet Intelligence Officer?

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FABIAN: On a selective basis. He didn't get everything. We gave him what applied to the theater or what applied in a general sense, but he did not get everything, no.

FARLEY: What sort of addressees did you have for your material.

FABIAN: Well, in the COPEK system there was, it would have been FRUPAC, FRUMEL, CINC Eastern Fleet, Washington, London. It was a five-sided thing and it was continuous, and as I said earlier, we always kept it loaded. If we didn't have any recoveries or anything to send on it we would send in a couple pages of this book, just to keep the volume up. Now the traffic, the raw material stuff the same way. (Look at my Cardinal out there. Wish he'd come round to this side. He's a pretty thing.)

FARLEY: (Yeah, beautiful. Well fed too.) Would you recall the physical layout of the buildings, the first place you were, whether there was a machine room or a translation room or one big room? Could you recall?

FABIAN: In Cavite when I first reported it was just one small room with a handful of people and all the processing was done right there. When we moved out to Corregidor, the intercept operators were in the leg straight ahead, the left hand branch of the tunnel. First, you came to a little tiny room, a dark room, called for radio fingerprinting and <sup>TINA</sup>tena. We didn't get a great deal of value out of that. Sometimes it helped to identify call signs by the characteristics of the sender's "fist." You know, the way he cut his letters off and all that sort of thing. Then on the right, going in, would be four positions, four desks of traffic analysts. On the left side was my desk, facing me was John Lietwiler's desk for the number two. Then, beyond them was the processing, the place you write up these big sheets I described.

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Then on the left was Swede Carlson, and his linguists, and we got quite a few of them ultimately. Then on the far end there was a little leg in here, where we had our general service communications for sending out our air raid reports, and all that sort of thing and then across from that was the vault. Now, there was one other character comes in here that you haven't asked about, Mert Stone. Well, he was a linguist out there but he was a nasty hunk of work. He was always mad at some God damn thing, and he was a great friend of Carlson's. I had as little to do with him as I possibly could. I wish I could think of other things to tell you here.

FARLEY: You mentioned machine processing. How extensive was it in the Philippines in the early days.

FABIAN: IBM?

FARLEY One IBM.

FABIAN: Yeah. There was an IBM company out there and it was not very extensive, no. On the contrary. We got it because I had used it in Washington and knew about it and when the general service communications was closed up over in Cavite thank God we got Cook because he was a tower of strength. Now when we moved to Monterey, we ultimately got everybody together and moved to Monterey. He set his machine room up in a garage attached to this apartment house.

FARLEY: Ok. Let me talk about the relationships with U.S. units and the British units. What did you know about the Army communications intelligence unit in the Philippines?

FABIAN: Very little. Very, very little. Now, as I said before, the Central Bureau asked us to merge with them, and I kind of checked around and I said no I don't want any of that.

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FARLEY: Did you know Joe Sherr?

FABIAN: I knew Joe Sherr quite well.

FARLEY: Howard Brown, in the Philippines at all?

FABIAN: I don't remember Brown. Joe Sherr I knew. Brown, Brown I don't think I knew him.

FARLEY: Where were they located? Where was the Army unit located, do you remember, in the Philippines?

FABIAN: It was with the Central Bureau.

FARLEY: Well, Central Bureau came later, in Australia. But, do you remember what they were called in the Philippines?

FABIAN: No, let me think now. I don't think I ever bumped into any out there.

FARLEY: Were you discouraged from associating with the Army troops, the intelligence troops?

FABIAN: No, no, no, never. There was just no agreement to cooperate. We all went off on our separate little ways. The first approach that was made actually, well, let me go back. When we first merged with the Australians, there were two Army officers working there, who I think were attached to the Central Bureau. They worked there for a while and then the Central Bureau moved out and they left.

FARLEY: Ok, good. Relationship with the British. You talked about Singapore and the rest. Were the British working on JN-25 also?

FABIAN: Oh yes, yeah.

FARLEY: Was there an exchange of information or intelligence technical operations?

FABIAN: There was an exchange on everything as regards code and cipher, collection and intelligence. They put it on their own facility and it got to our

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people through their facilities.

FARLEY: Ok, let me switch please sir.

(End tape I side B. Start tape II side A.)

Did the British provide anything useful in intelligence from their analysis of JN-25?

FABIAN: Anything useful?

FARLEY: Anything that we could use, anything that the Americans hadn't produced?

FABIAN: Well, I can't remember any specific thing, but the mere fact that they exchanged values, yes, I'd say they produced useful material.

FARLEY: Ok, Good. A question on attitude. Did you ever have any question of who was your superior headquarters? Did you feel you were working directly for OP-20-G or the CINC Asiatic fleet? Was there any question in your mind?

FABIAN: There was never any question in my mind. I was attached to and working for the Commander in Chief out there, but I knew that the back-up support had to come from 20-G, so it was all very free, the liaison back and forth. Very free.

FARLEY: How did you perceive the role of OP-20-G?

FABIAN: Well, I think probably the best thing to say about that is they were the back up for all of this stuff. They had the machine facilities, they had the linguists and what have you. Incidentally, just thought of another name, Commander Nave.

FARLEY: Oh, yeah.

FABIAN: N A V E

FARLEY: I know him.

FABIAN: He was a peculiar cuss. And when we moved to Monterey he and couple others worked in a room topside and he was working on a minor

cipher of some sort. I can't remember what it was. The building we were in had a common switchboard and we hadn't gotten our direct service, so he would pick up the phone and Christ, he would violate every rule of security in the book talking about this stuff. Until one day, I told him to shut up and I went up there and bawled the hell out of him. He was in the clouds as far as his work was concerned. He just forget these simple little other rules that governed people. Now, he went to Central Bureau.

FARLEY: That's where I knew him.

FABIAN: And I was glad.

FARLEY: Did he stay in the service? Did he still wear the uniform when he went to CB?

FABIAN: So far as I know.

FARLEY: That is a story I've never heard, how he ended up there, because the Army people were questioning why there was a Commander Nave, Navy, present. We thought he was a liaison type.

FABIAN: No, he was a Paymaster Commander. Oh as a matter of fact there was another one named Allen Murray that we had in Melbourne who went to Colombo the same time I did but he went to work for the Australian unit. No, not Colombo to, wait a minute, where the hell did he go? Allen Murray. No, I'm sorry I can't produce that. I thought he went to Colombo but I don't really think he did, now. He was a linguist.

FARLEY: How many Navy units were there out in the Pacific where a person could be assigned? There was CAST, and there was HYPO, and Singapore or did we have a liaison in Singapore?

FABIAN: Yeah, it was, it ended up in? God! Names! Mom-bata.

FARLEY: Ok, that's where he was.

FABIAN: Um?

FARLEY: That's where he was?

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: Ok. Let's talk about the relationship with the Pearl Harbor unit and CAST. Was there during the War any friction between CAST and HYPO?

FABIAN: Oh no, no, we exchanged letters quite frequently over Rochefort's or my signatures. Never any question about exchanges, really. Our relations were perfectly fine and I was never aware that this feuding that was going on locally, was going on. I had no idea it was happening. Now I have a feeling that maybe they were too hard on Rochefort, I don't know. I think he made a good contribution. I think he was a smart man. Well, obviously from that well system he devised, he was a thinking type.

FARLEY: Right. While we're talking about that, do you have any thoughts on the Redman brothers?

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: And the relationship with Rochefort.

FABIAN: Well, Jack Redman was took over from Safford, I guess. Didn't he? And then Goggins came after that. Joe Redman as the DNC used to come out to Nebraska Avenue quite frequently. Not to really run things, or not really to spend too much time finding out what was going on. He came out to play handball.

FARLEY: Migosh, is that so?

FABIAN: We had a little gym out there in the girl's school.

FARLEY: Were both of them highly respected Navy Officers?

FABIAN: I think so. In their field.

FARLEY: Right.

FABIAN: I think so.

FARLEY: Was either one more aggressive than the other?

FABIAN: Well I think Joe's manner was a little softer than Jack's. Jack was a little abrasive.

FARLEY: Ok.

FABIAN: Don't ever tell them I said this.

FARLEY: I won't. Ok. You mentioned the operation, the establishment of FRUMEL. You made it sound so simple. There must have been problems and difficulties. Could you talk about the difficulties you had?

FABIAN: Not really, because we set up with the Australians in the ACNB and at that stage of things we were small enough so we all could fit in the space they had. We recognized immediately that we were going to have to have a building. So Jack and I went to the Director of, what did they call him? Well, he was the public works type. We went to the Australian Navy public works type, and Director of Works, and told him what we were going to have to have, both for office space in town and for the intercept operators out at Morabin. And by the time the rest of our people got in we could accommodate them. There was really no problem.

FARLEY: Were they pretty helpful, the Australians, helpful?

FABIAN: Oh God yes, they were most helpful.

FARLEY: What targets were the Australians, the Australian Navy COMINT unit working on? What targets did they have?

FABIAN: Well, I mentioned that Nave was working on some minor system. Now what it was I don't know. But I think it was probably pretty much piecemeal, get interested in something and go ahead and work on it. We don't care what.

FARLEY: I see.

FABIAN: I think it was that kind of an operation. But when we got there we all worked on the same thing.

FARLEY: Were they working JN-25?

FABIAN: With us, yeah.

FARLEY: After you came.

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: How talented were the Australian analysts and linguists?

FABIAN: I'd say fairly qualified. Jack Newman himself was well qualified I think as a traffic analyst. They had a couple linguists whose names I don't remember who did well at their translating. But we didn't see much of them. They were off in a separate part of the building. We didn't bother much with them.

FARLEY: Most of those people were veterans of Tobruk and North Africa, weren't they?

FABIAN: Um.

FARLEY: Were most of those veterans from the North African intelligence unit?

FABIAN: Yeah, probably yeah.

FARLEY: That came back home.

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: One thing when we talked about the Redmans. I don't know whether you have any thoughts now or at the time, "way back when," of the controversy between ONI and ONC over who would control communications intelligence.

FABIAN: Oh yes, I know a little borders of it. OP-20-G would try to get support from the DNC I mean from ONI and ONI said this God damn stuff is never going to work, so the hell with you. Dig up your own money. So the DNC got it. Then when it started working, the DNC, the ONI people

would have given anything if they could have gotten control of it. But there was that friction, and as I say there was a very distinct feeling amongst the ONI people that the system was never going to work. So why spend all this money on it.

FARLEY: Oh, we talked about contributions for the Coral Sea and Midway battles. What was Melbourne's greatest contribution after the Coral Sea, Midway Battle, a little deeper into the war in the Pacific?

FABIAN: Well, let me think. Oh I think the continuing goings on up in Moresby. See, that went on for a long, long while. Rabaul, the air raids up there, the trying to send groups over the mountains down there, I can't remember the name of them.

FARLEY: Owen Stanleys.

FABIAN: Yeah, Owen Stanleys, right. But I don't think anything we could say, we did a major contribution to. We always did kind of lean on working on traffic that applied to our area out there, as our primary function, but we weren't restricted to that.

FARLEY: Do you feel that CAST never got due credit for their contributions?

FABIAN: In a way I do yeah. In a way I do.

FARLEY: Why was that? Why didn't you get credit? You didn't have good PR people, maybe? Why didn't you get due credit?

FABIAN: I don't really know. I guess we were so far removed that nobody thought about us. No, I don't think we got half the recognition we should have gotten. For instance, in my own case. Admiral Leary, unbeknownst to me sent a message. No, now wait a minute, let me get this straight. I think Washington came out and asked for the names of people who had made a major contribution and I enumerated them for Admiral Leary, and he originated the message back. And what I

didn't know was that he then fed in an addition to the foregoing my reference numbers recommended Commander Rudolph J. Fabian for distinguished service medal, but nothing was ever heard.

FARLEY: You didn't get it?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: Captain Whitlock was quite vociferous about lack of recognition for CAST.

FABIAN: He should have been. And as a matter of fact, I remember specifically that he was on our list of people who were outstanding in their contributions.

FARLEY: A shame. Sir, you asked about or you commented on support to the submarines. I don't think we need to go into that anymore. Shipboard intercept, were you aware that the Navy had units aboard ships doing intercept work.

FABIAN: Oh yeah, yeah.

FARLEY: Do you remember any of the people aboard and their mission and who provided the personnel?

FABIAN: Well, I think, I think Gil Slonim was one. I think he was on a carrier, and he was there for local listening for voice transmissions and all that sort of thing. I don't know that I know anybody else that had ever been out on one of these things. Gil used to talk about it.

FARLEY: Would you be aware whether there were more functions than intercept? Was there a processing function aboard ship or did they just intercept and pass raw material to someone else?

FABIAN: No they just intercepted and passed. I'm sure they passed very little. There was no big intercept, no big intercept effort at all aboard ship.

FARLEY: So that raw material was passed to a shore station?



FABIAN: Yeah, yeah.

FARELY: For processing.

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: Ok. Would the personnel be supplied by FRUPAC or FRUMEL or someone else?

FABIAN: Well, they'd have to have been supplied by OP-20-G's units from somewhere. I don't know just where but I never had to supply any so I don't know.

FARLEY: Ok. Well that was basically my question. So, the question: How was duty entered on the ship's log? Was this supposed to be a clandestine operation unknown to the ship's company or were they carried as normal crew on the ship?

FABIAN: Oh, these operators, these intercept, I think probably they were just attached to the communications' section and just carried openly as a radio operator.

FARLEY: Ok, thats great. Question on relationship with the Army Air Corps COMINT effort. Did you ever have any association?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: Did you ever know of any unit?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: I didn't either. Just curious.

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: All right. Why didn't FRUMEL move north when MacArthur went to Brisbane?

FABIAN: We were nicely arranged as far as space was concerned, as far as intercepts were concerned. I think the thought was but I can't confirm this. I think they thought that we could serve just as well where we were, as to move. I'm positive that was the case. Our communications

were great. No problem getting to each other.

FARLEY: So that was probably the reason they stayed there?

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: You want to take a break?

FABIAN: Yeah, I'll tell you what. Let's have a beer.

FARLEY: Well let's get back and try to get your recollections of November and the early days of December 41, before Pearl Harbor. What do you recall about the "Winds messages"?

FABIAN: Oh, yeah.

FARLEY: You want to talk about that?

FABIAN: It had become obvious to all of us, as you well know, that there was going to be a war. It was then a question of forces, and what have you. My boss was very, very fussy about keeping track of the Japanese, particularly the carriers. As you know, we've since learned that they went up to the Kurile Islands and they observed strict radio silence. So, they were not on the air, period. He would get me on the phone and say, "God damn we've gotta have something on these." I said, "Admiral don't sound off, there's nothing I can do." So we were in the dark about where the carriers were. The "winds" messages, when we found out that was going to happen, I took all my linguists and put them on known voice circuits. In addition to that, I had my intercept operators watching for the "winds" message. Now Tom Mackey, who worked for me was on one voice circuit, and he has since said that he heard the "winds" message. But he's the only one on earth that said that and what he did with it when he heard about I don't know, because he didn't tell me, and I was the boss. He didn't tell his head linguist, so Tom, missed a bet. His mental condition, incidentally,

he was a strange young man, he was very much a loner and sometimes mentally he would go off, shall I say suspiciously. Later on in life, he was in bad shape mentally. It's a damn shame. But no "winds" message, no nothin'. Then the next thing we knew was the attack.

FARLEY: Let me just clarify that, you might want to know this. Blair, in Silent Victory said that Mackey was reading economic reports and found characters "East Winds Rain" in the report and he told somebody and the superior says "You're wrong," and he brooded over this for years, brooded and brooded.

FABIAN: Now, I don't know who Tom was supposed to have told.

FARLEY: I have no idea.

FABIAN: None of the other people ever spoke up about anything and, Christ, it was to our advantage to sound off if we had.

FARLEY: Absolutely.

FABIAN: Incidentally, Clay Blair used to heckle the hell out of me. He'd call up and say I want to come by and interview you. I'd say "Mr. Blair, I'm sworn under oath, I can't talk to you." Well he'd wait a week and he'd try again. Now I bet you he tried ten times. I just, I said "I'm sorry, I'm under oath, if you get me relinquished from my oath, why I'll talk." But he doesn't do me too bad in the book.

FARLEY: No, he treated you well.

Mackey was also puzzled why you hadn't recruited the services of William Richie Wilson.

FABIAN: Now that was interesting because I didn't recruit the services of anybody. Rosie Mason handled all that and when he decided to fish

the linguists out of Japan, he is the one who made Wilson available for general service, not I. I didn't even know he was there. I remember Tom saying that.

FARLEY: So you get the brunt of the abuse and you really didn't deserve it.

FABIAN: Yeah. No, Rosie Mason handled that. Christ we could have used a language student, there's no question about it. We had enough material for everybody.

FARLEY: In November '41 there was a call sign change by Jap Fleet units and it made many of the Japanese ships unidentifiable. Do you remember that crisis? How long did it take for you to get back into it? Because there was subsequently on the 1st of December another call sign change and you talked earlier about chaos, chaotic conditions? Do you recall this time period?

FABIAN: No I don't, really. No I don't. All changes were chaotic, I might add, particularly the one before Midway. Had they not changed the system, the battle of Midway would have been even a more crowning success, but Admiral Spruance properly said this could have changed. One of these forces could have changed or something or other, I'm I'm not going to play it all out. No, I don't remember the call sign change you refer to.

FARLEY: Ok I don't know where I read this. Your group broke into a new JN-25 encipherment by the 4th of December 1941 and by Christmas you were reading messages again. But bouncing back to October, the fall of 41. Were you briefing your superiors that something was brewing and that things didn't look good in the Pacific, and war may be imminent? I don't know how you phrased it but?

FABIAN: I don't think I ever put anything like that in writing but Admiral

Hart, for instance, used to come to my tunnel once a week and he would read all the Purple messages. Then he would give his ideas. He would say, "This group is a "deep water," the ones that went down, the things were, this group is such and such, this group is something else." So rather than our telling him something was brewing, he knew damn well something was brewing. He would keep emphasizing to us to stay on the ball, to watch carefully, and come up with anything we could come up with. There was never any question about our relationship with Hart. He was imminently satisfied that he was getting everything we knew.

FARLEY: Do you think the people at Pearl Harbor, I don't want to put words in your mouth --. How do you think the people at Pearl Harbor, and I'm thinking of Kimmel and the Army general..?

FABIAN: Short.

FARLEY: Short, right. Were they kept apprised of the current intelligence developments?

FABIAN: My God I would be sure they were, but I don't know, I wasn't there.

FARLEY: Yeah, of course.

FABIAN: Of course, here we have Layton who is the bottleneck to the Admiral. Whether or not Rochefort, or anybody else out there had direct access to the Commander in Chief I don't know. I doubt that they did. I think Eddie Layton was the guy that would be responsible if there were anything withheld.

FARLEY: How about the people at HYPO and the people at OP-20-G? Do you think they were aware that the situation was becoming critical?

FABIAN: Oh yes, yes. There is no question in my mind about this. No question in my mind about it. I think the whole COMINT world knew it was

going to happen and were trying their God damndest to do something about it but they couldn't. It was impossible.

FARLEY: Yeah, the decision makers probably wanted the intelligence people to say this is going to happen on such and such a day and it's impossible.

FABIAN: Yeah, how true.

FARLEY: Lets move to about the 4th or 5th of December. What are your recollections of a couple of days before Pearl Harbor?

FABIAN: Well, as I say, Admiral Hart was just itching for information on where the hell are the carriers and we were trying our God damndest and we couldn't make him understand that if they don't go on the air we just can't tell where they are. Otherwise, I don't think we had any indications, really, that anything was amiss. There was a great buildup of Maru boats in the Central Pacific islands, Marianas, what have you. A vast one, and as matter of fact I remember one time and I can't quite put this in timewise; but I, in a little message to Rosie Mason, said that there were estimated to be around 400 Maru boats of various shapes and sizes well in the Marianas and what have you. I said that just before going off for a game of golf. I was promptly sent for, to "give us a list of them." So we had Charlie Johns come back. Incidentally have you talked to Charlie Johns.

FARLEY: No sir. Is he in Maryland area, do you know?

FABIAN: He was a traffic analyst with great ability.

FARLEY: I'll look him up. Is he still alive?

FABIAN: I don't know.

FARLEY: All right, I'll check him out sir.

FABIAN: He was a radio man first, maybe a chief. Charlie Johns and I came

back and sat down and made up the list of Maru boats for Rosie.

Now, yes, hindsight would say that maybe this should have been an indication.

But they call anything a Maru, a rowboat on up, so you really don't know.

FARLEY: Ok. Tell me about how you heard about Pearl Harbor.

FABIAN: How I heard? I was in my little bunkie up on the hill. I had an intercom between my desk and the office and my bedroom and I think it was about 4 o'clock in the morning when the thing buzzed and I answered it and they said Pearl Harbor's been bombed. I said I'll be right down, I jumped into some clothes and ran down, got in the tunnel, and talked with the various people who had heard about this. Then I got the Master at Arms, told him to break out the camp, get everybody up, and tell everybody that they can take one small piece of baggage and move down in the tunnel. Then I had bunks put up in the spaces where I could fit them. And we did "hot bunk," we lived in there. They didn't bomb us the first day, but we could see them flying over, they'd approach Cavite right over us but, when they started getting us we got real preferential attention, I can tell you. They got our galley. I already told you about the Army having commandeered our food supply. So, we set up a place to reheat the Army chow, right outside the tunnel entrance and we had some tables out there. And, we would frequently go out there for 40 winks or for rest or relaxation, what have you, and hear an airplane, and everybody would get up and run like hell for that tunnel entrance. And many times we just got inside in time, too. They really worked us over. They got our quarters up on the hill. I buried my clothes

in a 16 inch powder can. Someday I'd like to go back to Corregidor.

FARLEY: You mean it's probably still there? Who knows?

FABIAN: But, I don't know, we all knew some God damn thing was going to happen. Everybody knew it but you couldn't prove it.

FARLEY: Were the Army troops out in full battle regalia?

FABIAN: The Army? Oh, thats something for the book.

The Army was out in the field positions. And on the way back, up from my tunnel to my quarters, where I said I was gonna break the camp out and let them move down I didn't hear any movement from the Army at all. At that point, they had little bivouacs out on the hill out there, so when I got up to the house I called the Admiral's house, I mean the General's house, General Moore. And I said, "General, Pearl Harbor's been bombed and I haven't heard any activity from the Army." And he said, "Why the hell didn't somebody tell me?" And I said, "Well, that's your department. I don't know." So I told him the circumstances and he said, "Thank you very much." Then I could hear all kinds of activity. They really booted out.

FARLEY: So it took you to alert the Army troops on Corregidor.

FABIAN: Right. But you see, here again, Moore was under MacArthur and I don't think MacArthur had the very best people working for him, really. I don't know. I say that, its just a feeling that I have. For instance, he had Willoughby for Christ's sake and Willoughby was a dude. I wouldn't even talk with him.

FARLEY: It seems funny that they didn't have a channel of communication back to the mainland.

FABIAN: Oh, yeah.

FARLEY: Pretty sad.



FABIAN: Yes, I was quite surprised when General Moore said, "Why haven't I been told?"

FARLEY: And what was his position, was he the Chief?

FABIAN: He was the Allied Commander.

FARLEY: Of the command, ok. Were things pretty hectic soon thereafter, after Pearl Harbor? Tell me how you finally settled down, and got the troops back to work.

FABIAN: Oh pretty much, yes. As I say the Army commanded all our food so they would send a truck out before each what we laughingly called a meal. And we'd dish it up out there in our own utensils and things, and serve it. Our water supply they got on the first bombing raid, so we borrowed a little tank wagon from the Army and a tractor. We had to haul water from bottom side, it was about 3 miles I'd guess. And our island source of electricity was completely cut off. We ran that diesel until it got to the point where we had to, this was kind of a violation, but we had to do it. We had a Filipino, who was a very trusted soul, stand right on that diesel and pour oil the whole time.

FARLEY: Kept it functioning.

FABIAN: Yeah, yeah.

FARLEY: That's another thing. How did you maintain your equipment? You didn't have many spare parts or many mechanics did you?

FABIAN: I had one Chief Machinist Mate named Lowery, who was the Chief Master at Arms--the chief fixer of everything. And he was part of our unit and he went with us wherever we went. We took him along all the way down to Melbourne. He was a great man. He could do anything. He was our repair force.

FARLEY: Did you have special people doing repair of the cipher equipment?  
I'm talking about the ECMs. You had some ECMs, did you?

FABIAN: Yeah, we had ECMs. We didn't have anybody that was technically trained to do it but I'm sure we did our own fixes on them.

FARLEY: So, most of it was sort of a jury rig, if you had to, I suppose.

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: One thing I forgot way back when is to ask a question about security, badges, identification. Was there ever any a problem or was it by personal recognition?

FABIAN: It was pretty much by personal recognition. We had our own Marine force. And until any given Marine got to know everybody, if you weren't known to the Marine who was on watch, he'd push a button and get somebody from inside to come out and identify him.

FARLEY: Oh, I see. So there was no chance of any penetration, or any person who shouldn't have been there getting into the area.

FABIAN: Oh no, there was no question about that ever.

FARLEY: Ok. Well let's see, after things settled down, after Pearl Harbor and as I said, things were back moving, were you involved at all in the Yamamoto shutdown incident.

FABIAN: ((Noise at front door) Only...what the hell was that?)

FARLEY: (Must be the mailman, uh.)

FABIAN: (Oh, he's early today.) I don't think we contributed anything to the reading of it. I worried about it. I thought it was wrong to do what they did.

FARLEY: To shoot him down?

FABIAN: Yes. Because it could have compromised the hell out of us.

FARLEY: There was apparently much discussion on whether they should go ahead and shoot him down, and take the risk, but your thoughts were, "Don't do it!"

FABIAN: Yeah, I was afraid that they were going to shoot the whole system, because nobody could be that precise to arrange that specific meeting, unless they knew something.

FARLEY: Yeah, so you or FRUMEL didn't contribute anything toward that?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: You're talking about being at a precise place at a precise time. Did you ever talk to any of the submarine commanders later on and did they ask the question, "What happened? Because we were told to be at such and such a point at such and such a time and lo and behold there was a Japanese convoy there?"

FABIAN: I've heard nothing but praise in a backhanded way for that system where a sub would be told to go to a certain place at a certain time and they would always end up in wonderment. "What the hell, how did we know this?" I think some of them figured it out but a lot of the submarines didn't get to the specified place at the specified time and missed the bet, but that was beyond our control.

FARLEY: But they thought it was some sort of exotic intelligence?

FABIAN: Yeah, yeah.

FARLEY: Good. Sir, how much help did you get from captured material, Japanese codebooks or additive pages?

FABIAN: We got snatches of them down in Melbourne that were picked up, a page of a codebook, or something like that. After I left Melbourne, however; I read in somebody's book McCollum got his hands on a whole codebook, and instead of sending that down to our unit to be translated as the

gospel spread, he required whoever was the ranking officer down in Melbourne at the point to send a linguist up to translate it up for him, which I thought was awfully wrong.

FARLEY: Absolutely, absolutely.

FABIAN: But McCollum was like that.

FARLEY: So you feel that FRUMEL was sort of slighted by whoever in giving copies of captured material?

FABIAN: Well, I think he was so God damned ambitious he wanted to run everything. It wasn't a question of slighting, I don't think really or anything like, that it was just a question of, "I want to run this show and by God, here's my chance. Send me some linguists and we'll interpret the book and we'll read it up here." He was a nasty hunk of work, that man.

FARLEY: I heard that from many, from others.

FABIAN: Very ambitious. As a matter of fact I think he was probably one of the ones in ONI that said, "Oh Christ, this thing is never gonna work in war time, forget it."

FARLEY: Proved him wrong, didn't we?

FABIAN: Yep, we sure did.

FARLEY: What other battles did FRUMEL provide intelligence to the Commanders prior to?

FABIAN: Well, we provided piecemeal to all of them. In other words when you read a message and sent it in, it was providing the buildup so specifically I can't say that any one station contributed more than any other given station to the approach of a battle like Midway. We contributed just as much as anybody else to it.

FARLEY: Yeah, absolutely. Do you remember any others, and I'm trying to think

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of any other battles after Midway?

FABIAN: Oh, Coral Sea was one. Java Sea was one to a minor degree. Wasn't there a minor thing down at Ellis island? I can't remember. The Gilberts?

FARLEY: Gilberts, yes, and that was the island hopping. How about in Leyte and Linguyen Gulf and the battle of the Philippines. Were you people quite distant from the activity that you didn't get enough useful information?

FABIAN: Well, actually, see I was elsewhere.

FARLEY: You were back, you were home, right?

FABIAN: I was off in the wild blue yonder somewhere.

FARLEY: You were back, right? Let's see, what else happened toward the end of the war? You were with the British. Was it Java?

FABIAN: No in Colombo.

FARLEY: Colombo. Tell me about the operation in Colombo.

FABIAN: Well, they had an intercept station and a processing station right in a little place called Anderson. It was run typically British, I can't say anything more than that, really. It was lackadaisical. Everything stopped for tea, and all that sort of thing. But I'm sure they had unique intercepts that were sent in on this five-point circuit.

FARLEY: Did you have support? Did you have American troops there with you to help you out or were you the sole American?

FABIAN: I was the American.

FARLEY: That was it?

FABIAN: Yeah.

FARLEY: So you didn't have a secretary or a batman?

FABIAN: Oh, no.

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FARLEY: Didn't have your own batman?

FABIAN: No. And furthermore the senior Liaison Officer to the Eastern Fleet was sent home without relief, so I took his job too. So, I'd go to the staff meetings, it was really to have something to do. It was boring as hell.

FARLEY: One question I forgot to ask is the personnel strength. The personnel strength of CAST and Melbourne later on after the war. How many people did you have, total?

FABIAN: At Melbourne, I would, I don't know what the hell. I can come up with a ballpark guess. I would say that we had 5 linguists, we had 5 traffic analysis people and I'd say if we had 50 people it would be a generous estimate. We didn't have many. You see the intercept station itself was out in the country so they lived with and were supported by the Australians out there. I went out occasionally to check up on them. But the office types, and there weren't very many. I understand that they had a little chaos, after Sid Goodwin left. And I can't remember his name. Whoever took over was a linguist and he was "dog meat" and he was arbitrary. And, I understand that the morale was way down the hill at that point. I don't know where I got that.

FARLEY: Was morale a problem at all throughout the war when you were commander there?

FABIAN: No, no, no. No, we had good morale.

FARLEY: Did you have any people who went "over the hill," as the Army term is, or were "not present for duty?"

FABIAN: Uh uh.

FARLEY: Not at all?

FABIAN: Never.

FARLEY: That's good. Sir, right after Pearl Harbor, Roeder, I don't know whether he was a commander, brought all of CINC, Atlantic or Asiatic Fleet files to you for reading and destruction if things get pretty tight. Would you recall that? Was it Mason out there burning files?

FABIAN: Yeah. When the Asiatic Fleet staff was evacuated they had a then commander Bob Dennison, who later became Vice Admiral Dennison in this country, but he was left behind to clean up the loose ends and it's quite right. The files were sent to me, and I knew that something was getting pretty rotten. I was beginning to be afraid that war was going to break out, and I had all this stuff to get rid of so I went down to see him one day. And I said, "You're the senior member of the Asiatic Fleet Staff here and so this has to be your decision. I've got all the Asiatic Fleet files and I think it's time to burn them, what do you think?" And he says, "Yes, its time to burn them." So, we got a couple of gasoline drums and we started some pretty good fires and we each sat there and we read the files, read the pieces of paper, we were supposed to remember all this, a couple cabinets full, and then drop them in the fire. And we got rid of all that.

FARLEY: I'll bet you didn't remember many, did you?

FABIAN: Yeah, I couldn't even remember that this had happened.

FARLEY: Is there anything more you want to talk about on the evacuation?

FABIAN: I can't think of anything else, really.

FARLEY: Shall we go to, after you left the Pacific Theater, and came back, and then your career after that.

FABIAN: When I came back I went to the staff in Nebraska Avenue. And then

when the war was completely over, I had been promised that I would be sent to sea after the war. So I went to my boss who in turn forwarded my request to this communicator whose name I can't remember. He was a personnel type and he said, "No, those God damn people stayed ashore while we were out fighting, there's no reason to give them a chance to go to sea now." But, nevertheless, I got, I don't know how I worked it, but I got Exec of a heavy cruiser, and I spent a couple of very pleasant years on that.

(Tape II, Side A ends abruptly) (Tape II, Side B Begins)

FARLEY: Sir, let's try that, that looks good.

FABIAN: After the war was over and I was released, I finally was released to general service and I became Executive Officer of the BREMERTON, which is a heavy cruiser and we operated for about 8 months out in the China Sea. We shuttled between Shanghai, Tsingtao, Japan. Good cruise. Then I was detached and given command of a fleet oiler and operated both in the States and in the WESTPAC and made a few trips replenishing the fleet which was then moved south and was operating off IndoChina as the buildup to what happened. Then in '61 I was retired from my many years of long and faithful service. About that time I was kind of glad. I had a very pleasant life really. I can't say that anything was unpleasant from the standpoint of duty, I mean it was tough, we had to have a war and that was kind of rough during it, but I had good duties, I enjoyed this OP-20-G work. It was beautiful.

FARLEY: So you went back to sea. Did you enjoy being a sailor again?

FABIAN: Yep, yep.

FARLEY: That was your first love, was it?



FABIAN: Well, actually, if you're going to get promoted you have to do it. And although I was a Captain, I made Captain when I was on the tanker, I still liked it.

FARLEY: A question I should have asked earlier, is when you were a young Naval Officer and you halfway considered making intelligence a career, did you wonder how it would affect you promotion-wise in your career? Did you think it was worth the gamble?

FABIAN: I never set my sights on intelligence, in any sense of the word. The way this happened to me was that I had, as I spoke earlier, I applied for ordnance post graduate work. I was not on the list when the selections were announced. The three-page letter that I received from a man named Safford, typewritten, I read and I didn't know what the hell he'd said after three pages.

FARLEY: How do you think he got your name? He saw your grades in the Academy or..?

FABIAN: No. I have a feeling that one of my predecessors was a good friend of mine, that he recommended me. I don't know this. But I took this letter around to several senior officers on the ship. I finally found one who says yeah, he knows about that. He says "It's kind of secret, but, I suggest you go ahead and take it cause you're not going to get your ordnance PG." So that was my introduction to this world. And here again, I liked it. I thought I'd go nuts back there working on things like the Enigma. Oh God, but as it turns out, I'm happy with my life. I feel I made a contribution, and that's what it's all about.

FARLEY: That's right. The attitude of the senior Naval Officers way back when again toward intelligence. Could you contrast that, say in the late 30's with late 40's, for instance?

FABIAN: Well, I know there were a great number of them who kind of had doubts

about intelligence in general and about our methods of obtaining it, and so forth. Here again, as applied to our work, the fact that ONI said oh hell, it'll never work. The hell with it, don't fund it. And then it started working, then they wanted it and they never got it, except the last guy who in FRUMEL I think was an intelligence guy. And I think that was purely because attrition had removed practically everything and he was the senior one left and they didn't care much about what happened. It was a great, great period of my life, I can tell you. Now, I sincerely hope that you're going to get something out of all this.

FARLEY: We will, yes. Let me ask another question about the "need-to-know." Do you think there is any problem now or was there any problem in World War II or Korea about the protection of the source, and that a intelligence officer or a commander was not provided intelligence because of the desire or the need to protect the source? Would you comment on that please, sir.

FABIAN: I don't really think that the restrictions on "need-to-know" were too restrictive. I think if a commander was in a position where he might have to use some of this stuff he was given the clearance. I think each case was governed on the personality of the person. In other words, Willoughby did not a clearance for this, although he had a long history of being an Intelligence Officer.

FARLEY: He did not have a COMINT clearance?

FABIAN: No, I never briefed him, I never said a word to him. Now, MacArthur and his Chief of Staff Dick Sutherland did, but not Willoughby.

FARLEY: Did Sutherland sit in on your briefings with MacArthur?

FABIAN: He would occasionally be called in. MacArthur would buzz him, say

say "Dick, come in, I got something here," so they'd read it together, but otherwise not as a general rule. Dick was not a seeker of information just to know the information. If it applied to him he wanted it, but otherwise no.

FARLEY: What are your impressions of MacArthur? What were your impressions when you were a young officer there?

FABIAN: I was, if not overwhelmed, I was whelmed, by the guy's acting ability and showmanship. I don't know whether I told you or not earlier. One day I went in with a hot juicy item. I think it was after this Moresby thing, and I turned out right. So, the next time I came in he said, "You know you're a great man you saved my neck." And he said, "I want to tell you a story." So we started pacing. Christ he had an office twice as long as this whole house. We started pacing, and he started telling me the story of "The Spy" by James Fenimore Cooper. And I didn't know what the hell he was getting at until suddenly he stopped and he turned to me and he put his finger on my chest and he said, "You're like the spy." You don't get any recognition." He said, "I'm going to get you the Army Distinguished Service medal, and the Navy Distinguished Service medal." And I got in my car and I drove right over to Admiral Leary's office. I said, "You better get over and cool that guy off." Because security was not part of his language. Maybe he was exuberant over something, but I said he threatened to do this, and security-wise this could be the worst thing that could ever happen. So my boss went over, next morning. Next day I went over to brief Admiral Leary and then up to MacArthur. MacArthur said, "You're a very unselfish man. I'm proud of you. After this war is over I'm going to get you the Army

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Distinguished Service medal, and the Navy Distinguished Service medal." Obviously I didn't get them, I didn't deserve them.

FARLEY: Well, that was a compliment coming from him.

FABIAN: It was real funny.

FARLEY: Yeah, he was quite a character. Do you recall any association you had with three star Admirals or higher than that?

Actually, being in Australia you were sort of out of the public eye.

FABIAN: Well, yeah.

FARLEY: Which was bad, really.

FABIAN: No, I don't care about. That would have been selfish. No I don't think I had any of the top ones, but I'm not unhappy about things. I'm retired, I'm living well. I'm falling apart.

FARLEY: Aren't we all. Sir, toward the end of the war did you ever have any thoughts about a consolidation of the intelligence effort, and I'm talking about a unified agency that would supervise the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.

FABIAN: I think it would be a great mistake.

FARLEY: So that was your feeling when AFSA was established way back in the '49 - '50 period?

FABIAN: Yeah, I think it would be a great mistake, because each service has their own requisites and if you get em all mixed up like a can of worms, one is going to lose out in favor of the other. No, I think they should be kept separated.

FARLEY: Let me ask about the abundance of books on the intelligence operations in the Pacific. I'm talking about Costello's book and Gordon Prange's book and Ronald Lewin's book and all of the books that

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purport to tell the true story of what happened. What are your thoughts on those?

FABIAN: Well, I think it's a shame. They're exploiting something. Clay Blair, for instance. I think it's a shame that he ever did that. I particularly feel that Jasper Holme's book was the greatest mistake I've ever seen. This stuff shouldn't be bandied around lightly. The more it's talked about, it's going to be retained in somebody's memory after and each time the security gets a little worse. A little tougher.

FARLEY: That's right. Have any of these authors come by? You talked about one man. Any of the others call you and say, I'd like to talk to you?

FABIAN: Clay Blair is the only one.

FARLEY: The only one? Lewin didn't call you? Have you read the latest book, the "Puzzle Palace" by Bamford, on NSA.

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: That's an expose on NSA.

FABIAN: It's called the "Puzzle Palace."

FARLEY: How about David Kahn, has he ever called?

FABIAN: No.

FARLEY: He made reference to you quite a bit in his...

FABIAN: Yeah, I know he did. Who was the "Puzzle Palace" by?

FARLEY: Bamford, James. James Bamford. But it's an expose type of thing.

FABIAN: No, I was surprised when Kahn's book came out, and he was real good to me.

FARLEY: What were your thoughts when Winterbotham's book came out? That was the first of the series.

FABIAN: Who?

FARLEY: Winterbotham, Captain or Commander Winterbotham, the Britisher who broke all of this way back.

FABIAN: I don't think I've ever read it.

FARLEY: Haven't you, really?

FABIAN: I don't think I've ever heard of it.

FARLEY: That was the first one to talk about the British effort in Europe. Do you feel that the Pacific War was a second rate war as compared to Europe?

FABIAN: I've heard it expressed by senior people, that their needs were not provided for because the Atlantic War was the more important of the two. Now, if you were to ask me who said that I don't know. I just wouldn't be able to recall. But, yes, I think they concentrated too much on the Atlantic to the detriment of the Pacific. Now, I say this not knowing all the facts and I don't know. Maybe I'm completely wrong. Maybe it was because I was in the Pacific and I felt it out there.

FARLEY: You did feel it though, didn't you.

FABIAN: Yeah, yeah.

FARLEY: I think everyone who was there felt it. Sir, is there anything else that you would like to put on the record?

FABIAN: I can't think of anything, now I have your name and so forth and if I think of anything that we may have missed, I can drop you a note.

FARLEY: All right. I have a sheaf of papers here, one is the usual bit we send out to people after an interview. It's an accessibility statement saying, "I designate certain people be permitted to hear my tape or read the transcript," and it goes from "all who seek access" to "no one,"

and all in between, talking about the transcripts and the tapes. And, then I have a letter from General Faurer saying, "Thanks a lot." (and I hear the rains coming down,) and another one, (interrupted by dog barking, "Tiger") on understanding concerning continuing protection of secrets. It's a form letter and I'll just sign it in case you want it for your record, and you can read it at your leisure and send it back.

FABIAN: Ok.

FARLEY: There's an envelope here. Today is the 4th. Can't think of anything else.

FABIAN: No, I can't think of anything else.

FARLEY: I'm sure I will on the way back, driving back.

FABIAN: If I do think of something, that is, that I think might, now knowing what you're interested in I think might help, I'll write it down.

FARLEY: I've taken up a lot of your time, but I do appreciate it. It's been worthwhile.

FABIAN: I've enjoyed it.

FARLEY: Sir, what kind of a classification should we put on this interview?

FABIAN: I'm going to have to leave that up to you. I don't know.

FARLEY: Secret, COMINT Channels do you think, or is it higher than that?

FABIAN: Thats, all right.

FARLEY: Let's make it Secret, COMINT Channels.

FABIAN: Ok sir, we have said nothing that is not in any of those books on the book shelves in there.

FARLEY: Yeah, couple of references to maybe a little techniques on, maybe JN-25. That'll protect it. I mean if we make the classification Secret, COMINT Channels only.

FABIAN:            Ok, let's do that.

FARLEY:            Sir, thanks much, I'm going to turn it off now.

FABIAN:            I've enjoyed it.

FARLEY:            Thanks again.

FABIAN:            I just hope that I have given you something.

FARLEY:            You have!

THE END